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international migration and development

Note verbale dated 12 October 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations has the honour to submit herewith a letter from H.E. Masood Khan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations Office at Geneva, in his capacity as Chairman of the Council of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), transmitting a summary of the International Dialogue on Migration held by IOM at its 90th Council session (see annex), for circulation to Member States as a document of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 12 October 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I am writing this letter in my capacity as the current Chairman of the Council of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

IOM and its membership welcome the forthcoming High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development being held by the General Assembly on 14 and 15 September 2006. The dialogue will offer an opportunity to call attention to and promote coherence between migration and development policy and practice, identify ways and means to increase development benefits of migration and reduce its negative impact.

The General Assembly, in its resolution 60/227, had invited IOM to contribute to the High-level Dialogue.

At its 90th session in November 2005, the Council of the IOM held discussion, inter alia, on topics of direct relevance and interest to the upcoming High-level Dialogue. At the conclusion of the Council session, I informed the Council members that, before the High-level Dialogue, I would transmit to the President of the General Assembly a summary of the main points of our dialogue, held here in Geneva, on policy coherence and the nexus between migration and development (see enclosure).

The Council session held its discussion in the framework of IOM's International Dialogue on Migration. The Dialogue was set up in 2001 consistent with IOM's constitutional mandate to provide a forum for member States and observers, partner intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders to share experiences and best practices on migration. It aims to facilitate better understanding of contemporary migration dynamics, to foster inter-State cooperation on migration and to promote coherence between migration and related policy domains.

Over the years, IOM's 118 member States and 87 observers (of which 20 are States) have been taking up the topic of migration and development at various workshops of the Dialogue. They also requested that a special panel on the topic be convened at the 90th Council session. The special panel, within an overall Dialogue theme of "Towards policy coherence on migration", was based on a background paper "Policy approaches to migration and development", outlining approaches to minimize potential negative effects of migration and to harness the benefits of migration for development purposes.

The forthcoming High-level Dialogue is also important for the deliberations of the IOM Council on IOM Strategy and more broadly on IOM relationship with the United Nations, as suggested in the recent correspondence between the IOM Director-General and the Office of the Secretary-General. The results of the High-level Dialogue will no doubt feature In the discussions on these important topics in the IOM Council later this autumn.

The collective challenge before us is to convert the adjacency of multiple organizations dealing with migration and development into synergy that reinforces national and international endeavours.

I remain at your disposal if you need further details or background, or wish to discuss the contents.

(*Signed*) Masood **Khan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the
United Nations Office at Geneva
Chairman of the IOM Council

Enclosure

International Dialogue on Migration
International Organization for Migration

Ninetieth Council Session
29 November - 2 December 2005

Towards Policy Coherence on Migration
Migration and Development: lessons learned and policy approaches

CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY

Introduction

1. Attention to migration is at a historic high. The international community has become increasingly aware of t opportunities that migration presents for growth, development and stability.

2. Membership in the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has rapidly expanded, now comprising 1 member States (up from 67 States in 1998) and 89 observers (20 States plus numerous partner inter-governmental a non-governmental organizations).

3. The UN Secretary General has identified migration as a priority for the international community and the UN Gene Assembly will hold its first high-level event devoted to migration in the form of a High-Level Dialogue International Migration and Development (HLD) at its sixty-first session in September 2006.

4. In recognition of their complementary and shared objectives and areas of work relating to migration issues, the hea of six international organizations - the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labo Organization (ILO), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN High Commissioner for Hum Rights (OHCHR), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the UN Conference on Trade and Developm - formed the Geneva Migration Group (GMG), an inter-agency consultative mechanism. Since the conclusion of t IOM Council, the GMG has been renamed the Global Migration Group and expanded to include the UN Departme of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN Development Programm (UNDP), and the World Bank. Its terms of reference have been broadened as well.

5. Various regional, sub-regional and global economic, political and security institutions and organizations have placed migration on their agendas.

6. Recent reports by IOM, the World Bank and the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) all e attention to the role that migration can play today and in the future in fostering development and reducing pover The impact of migration, the reports found, depends on the political, social, legal and economic environments which the migration process takes place, and implementation of appropriate migration management policy strategies

IOM's International Dialogue on Migration

7. IOM's International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) serves as a forum for IOM member States and observers t exchange views and experiences and to promote coherence between migration and related policy domains with range of other stakeholders and actors.

8. Devising and implementing sound migration policies are key challenges of migration management and IOM member States have therefore taken up the topic of Migration and Development within the framework of the IDM o several occasions. They requested that a special panel on Migration and Development be convened at political lev in the framework of the IDM at the 90th IOM Council Session in 2005. The discussions were generally guided by th theme *"Towards Policy Coherence on Migration"*, which reflected the recognition that without policy coherence at a levels migration's promise cannot be fully realized.

9. The following sections of this Chairman's Summary reflect the dialogue that took place at the 90th Council Session, highlighting in particular those topics most relevant to the HLD.

Towards Policy Coherence on Migration

10. During the discussions, it was recognized that migration is a transnational and multifaceted phenomenon which affects and is affected by many related policy domains/issues (trade, health, environment, security, and others).

Policy coherence within governments

11. Several speakers and delegates indicated that policy coherence must begin at the national level, within governments. For multi-lateral cooperation to be effective, individual States must first develop coherent migration policies, address the need for inter-ministerial collaboration and gain basic migration management competences.

12. Each State should work to promote coherence between its policies on different aspects of migration. For example, if properly formulated, policies to promote desired migration and policies to reduce unwanted migration need not be contradictory, and in fact can be mutually reinforcing.

13. Furthermore, consultation and coordination among concerned ministries are critical, so that actions in one domain do not inadvertently prejudice priorities in another and synergies between different domains can be identified and realized.

14. Speakers and delegates emphasized that the capacity to manage migration is critical to coherence efforts. States should have the capacity to analyze the impact of migration and other policies to identify contradictions, and to formulate strategies to achieve coherence. The GCIM found that virtually all countries lack - to varying degrees - the necessary experience, resources and infrastructure to effectively and comprehensively manage migration.

15. In addition, speakers and delegates noted that sound data and analysis on global patterns of migration, national migration trends and policies, remittances and related phenomena must be available to inform policy making and further policy coherence efforts. The importance of distinguishing between different types of migration in discussions on migration policy was emphasized.

Policy coherence between States

16. It was recognized that cooperation between States at bilateral and multilateral levels is vitally important to enhancing coherence and improving the prospects for mutually-beneficial migration.

17. In particular, it was noted that regular cooperation between sending and receiving countries is key to formulating coherent policies beneficial to all involved parties. As an example, for the first time, in September 2005 in Bali, Indonesia, representatives of several countries of destination in Asia and the Gulf had participated in the Ministerial Consultations on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia. It became clear that countries of origin and destination share similar concerns and interests in the global labour market.

18. Speakers and delegates highlighted the advantages of bilateral agreements between countries of origin and destination in facilitating labour migration. It was suggested that sending countries should consider jointly approaching countries of destination, as a collective approach may increase their ability to ensure protection for the human rights of migrants. It was also observed that regional economic, political and security institutions often play a key role in facilitating and coordinating States' policies on migration.

19. Some delegates suggested that an effective means to achieving coherence on migration would be the development of an international legal instrument governing the movement of people. Other delegates indicated that they do not see development of a new normative framework as a desirable or fruitful endeavour and favour the development of national level migration management capacity, including with the assistance of organizations such as IOM, and

regional informal consultation mechanisms on migration. It was noted that although fragmented advances may be coherent, this may be the most realistic approach to take at this point to build consensus on discrete issues where th possible in the near term.

Engagement of key stakeholders, including the private sector and international organizations

20. It was acknowledged that stakeholders such as international organizations, the private business sector, trade uni and NGOs have valuable contributions to make to migration policy dialogues, and States should make efforts identify and actively engage them.

21. Reflecting the importance of engaging key stakeholders, IOM has formed a Business Advisory Board (BAB), wh was launched at the 90th Council Session[1]. The delegates generally expressed an interest in being informed of outcomes of the BAB's meetings and its future work plan.

22. The need for inter-agency cooperation was also discussed, particularly in the context of the recommendation of GCIM for the formation of an Inter-agency Global Migration Facility (GMF). It was reported that the GMF called in the GCIM report would not need to be a new institution and could well be taken on board by the expanded GM the focus of which could be on capacity building, policy formation and data collection. The GCIM report did propose changes to IOM's position in the existing inter-agency structure, and the GCIM's representative observed t IOM should remain a key organization in the migration field and a provider of one of the most relevant fora discussion of migration issues.

23. Several delegates expressed their support for the expanded GMG, with some expressing the view that IOM should t the lead role in the expanded GMG. Many delegates emphasized the desirability of establishing lines communication between the expanded GMG and the member States.

Human rights of migrants

24. Many speakers and delegates underlined the importance of protecting the human rights of migrants. Attention w called to the role of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Memb of their Families (ICMW) in bringing coherence to the protection of the human rights of migrants. A view w expressed that in many ways the Convention simply codifies existing international standards for the protection migrants' rights, including provisions found in existing human rights treaties that are not specific to migrants. The n for wider ratification of the Convention, in particular by countries of destination, was stressed.

25. It was suggested that if countries of origin jointly approached countries of destination to negotiate labour migrat agreements, rather than negotiating bilateral agreements, these countries of origin would be in a stronger position negotiate better terms and conditions for labour migrants emigrating from their countries and protect the worke human rights.

26. One delegate pointed out that States often actively demand that other States observe the human rights of their nation abroad, but fail to meet their own obligations to respect the human rights of migrants present in their territor Another delegate expressed the opinion that by ensuring the availability of legal migration channels that match labo supply and labour demand, States can create optimal conditions for the reception and integration of migrants. A another delegate noted that family reunification is an important component of the human rights of migrants and may essential to productivity and effective integration.

[1] Five Members of the BAB and IOM's Director General reported on the first BAB meeting, which had taken place the previous day.

Migration and Development

27. It was widely noted by speakers and delegates that international migration has the potential to generate substantial welfare gains for all stakeholders. It was also observed that, in certain instances, migration can have negative developmental impact, such as brain drain and the related loss of crucial social services.

28. The impact of migration on development depends on whether developed and developing countries have effective policies in place to explore and enhance its positive contributions and minimize its negative effects. It was observed that the migration and development nexus impinges on a variety of crucial policy and management issues in such areas as remittances, diasporas, brain drain and brain circulation, human resource development, return and reintegration, and labour migration.

29. It was emphasized that, in order to identify effective policies, tools must be found to assess the impact of migration on development and vice versa. There is a need for States to share existing data on migration and its effects, and to collect more specific, comparable data.

Policy coherence between migration and development policy agendas

30. Several speakers and delegates expressed frustration with the widespread failure of States to mainstream migration into development policy and planning. As a result, it is unlikely that the positive benefits of migration will be fully reaped and that the challenges presented by migration will be fully addressed.

31. One delegation observed that despite migration's potential to have a substantial positive impact on development, migration is not adequately recognized in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which have become a major strategic framework of reference for international development agencies. Similarly, it was argued that developed countries should integrate migration into their development strategies and consider the development effect of their migration policies. The creation of a specific "migration and development" budget line was referred to by one delegation, a practice which could be an asset to advance the objective of mainstreaming migration in development strategy.

32. It was noted by several speakers and delegates that the ***migration community*** is more actively engaged in exploring the links between migration and development than the development community. The work done by the ***development community*** on migration issues is often not identified as such. Similarly, the development community does not always recognize the impact of development work on migration pressures in developing countries.

33. In order to achieve policy coherence on migration and development issues, there must be dialogue and consultation between ministries working on development and ministries working on migration, as well as other relevant ministries, ideally taking a "whole of government" approach. Examples of strategies for achieving inter-ministerial coherence, such as appointing migration and development focal points in each relevant ministry, creating awareness of the need for intra-governmental coherence at the political level, and holding regional dialogues and consultations that involve migration and development issues were mentioned.

Contributions of diasporas to development

34. The presentations and discussions made clear that diasporas can contribute significantly to the development of their home countries. Speakers and delegates identified various measures that States can take to mobilize diasporas and enhance their contributions through specifically-targeted policies.

35. A delegate noted that developments such as global integration and technological advances have resulted in the growth of diasporas. Despite the increase in diasporas, there was an institutional vacuum because no single international institution had ownership of diaspora issues and responsibility for mobilizing diasporas, and a financial vacuum because there was no identified source of funding for the costs associated with mobilizing diasporas, such as the costs

to build government capacity to identify and interact with diasporas and the costs to undertake banking reforms ar other regulatory changes to maximize remittances and their effect on development.

36. One delegation mentioned that in one country years of migration, spurred by economic opportunities abroad, fligh from armed conflict, violence and natural disasters, and family reunification had resulted in 25% of nationals livin abroad. The diaspora communities had organized themselves in different types of groupings, for example, b community of origin, by professional activity or by interest.

37. There was discussion of methods that countries could employ to engage their diasporas. Consular networks are means to maintain contact with diasporas and gather information on their situation, in order to make carefully-tailore diaspora policies. One delegation, drawing on his own national experience, mentioned programs which provide a co financing and investment mechanism in social projects with the participation of diasporas and relevant local an national actors. Fora for nationals abroad, bringing representatives of the diasporas together with the government t learn about the diasporas' needs, expectations, views and concerns, and to establish a constructive dialogue betwee the government and the diaspora communities were also referred to.

38. One delegation had made great efforts to engage its numerous diaspora by sponsoring a Homecoming Summit 2001, acknowledging the contributions of its citizens abroad. In addition, citizenship laws had been adjusted to gra dual citizenship to nationals abroad who lost their citizenship by reason of their acquisition of citizenship of anoth country. This had helped remove significant hurdles in opportunities for the diaspora to invest in their country origin. It was also reported that legislation was being debated which would make it possible for nationals abroad vote in elections.

39. It was suggested that governments of developed and developing countries, as well as international organization should share the burden of developing policies to maximize migration's positive impact on development and pover reduction: developed countries and international organizations could support developing countries in setting u databases where members of their diaspora could register on a voluntary basis and maintain links with their hom countries.

40. Much of the discussion was focused on remittances, a significant way that diasporas contribute to poverty reductio and development. Officially-recorded international remittances received by developing countries in 2005 wer estimated at about USD 167 billion, with unrecorded remittances through formal and informal channels estimated t be at least half as large as recorded flows. In some countries, remittances are larger than other sources of income suc as exports, foreign direct investment, official development aid and tourism. In order to inform policy-making, ther was a call for better remittance data and analysis.

41. Several speakers and participants emphasized that the impact of remittances on development is not alway straightforward. For example, remittances were often used for consumption, rather than being put toward uses wit durable development impacts. In addition, a portion of the funds sent were expended on transfer costs. In this respec the need to liberalize the remittance transfer industry and encourage competition in the remittance transfer busines was noted.

42. Differing points of view were expressed regarding the extent to which governments should be involved in remittanc management. Some argued for active government management of remittances with the objective of maximizing ther development impact. It was suggested that governments should create an enabling environment that would attrac investment by diasporas as well as remittance recipients. The role of governments in creating policies to improv infrastructure and governance, eliminate corruption, improve access to credit and provide incentives fo entrepreneurship was stressed.

43. Others stressed that remittances are private funds, and that governments should avoid becoming overly-reliant o remittances and other contributions made by migrants and growing complacent in terms of their development policy

While remittances and other contributions can have important development effects, they should not be perceived as potential substitutes for international development assistance or national development budgets and economic reform strategies.

44. It was widely acknowledged that the benefits of migration were not limited to the financial contributions of diasporas. For example, migration could result in the transfer and circulation of knowledge, skills and technology between host and home countries. Highly skilled professionals could make critical contributions to the development of their home countries. Some programs provide an opportunity for the temporary return of highly skilled professionals to their region of origin.

45. Several speakers and delegates focused on the need for human resource development. It was noted that globalization must address the movement of people, and not just goods and capital. The costs of developing human capital for an increasingly global labour market should be borne by the beneficiaries, including countries of destination and industries in these countries.

46. It was noted that improved human resource development policies and programmes are needed in countries of origin to prepare potential migrants for the needs of the global labour market. There is a need for mapping existing human resources (labour supply) and needs at national, regional and global levels (labour demand). Such mapping exercises would require, among other things, capacity building activities. Both countries of origin and destination are interested in seeing migrants be employed in their host countries - for example, countries of origin stand to benefit from increased remittances, while countries of destination avoid increased burden on their social security systems resulting from unemployed migrants. The opportunities for migrants to be employed in their host countries could be increased through measures such as language training and anti-discrimination activities.

47. Mode 4 of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) was discussed as a mechanism for facilitating temporary labour migration, although it was acknowledged that commitments under Mode 4 have generally been limited to highly skilled workers.

Managing population dynamics and skilled resources

48. Migration is a natural phenomenon. However, unauthorized or illicit flows are rooted in poverty, conflict and lack of good governance. Delegates said that policies addressing these root causes would reduce migration pressures. It was suggested that to reduce poverty, developed States must be willing either to invest in developing countries and import their products, or to accept migrants from developing countries into their countries. One delegate remarked that while the "products or people" dichotomy may be valid in the long-term, in the short-term countries should not look to trade to relieve migration pressures, or to migration to relieve pension strain in countries with declining populations.

49. It was noted that retention of skilled personnel is an important issue, and that measures should be taken to avoid the cycle in some developing countries where the loss of trained personnel leads to the loss of critical social services. Attention was called by one delegate to the responsibility of developed countries to help avoid brain drain. Measures taken to limit active recruitment in cases where recruitment had significant negative repercussions were commended, and the exploration of the possibility of a global approach to ethical recruitment was encouraged.

Role of the IOM

50. Migration now touches every country in the world, with all 191 States either at points of origin, transit or destination, or often all three at once. The configuration of migration flows has become more diverse and complex, and the international mobility of persons has become an established feature of contemporary economic, social and political life.

51. Increasing global and regional economic integration, advances in communication and transportation systems, and differences in the demographic configurations in the developed and developing countries define and drive migration patterns.

52. With 118 member States, 20 observer States, in addition to numerous observer inter-governmental and no governmental organizations, and 290 field locations, the IOM now has an increasingly global presence.

53. Today more than ever, States recognize the value of cooperative and managed approaches to migration issue Various forums for inter-state dialogue and cooperation have been developed, and shared understandings a emerging on the nature and role of migration in today's mobile world.

54. The Organization plays a pivotal role in providing fora for migration policy dialogue and policy development. IOM International Dialogue on Migration has provided a valuable forum for governments and other stakeholders exchange views and experiences and thereby promote better understanding and cooperation on internation migration issues. In addition, through its active support to regional consultative processes on migration (RCPs), IO has helped States to initiate and sustain these inter-state consultation mechanisms around the world.

55. Migration contributes to world economic growth. If managed properly, it can contribute to development, stability economies and societies worldwide. Heightened international attention to migration presents a window opportunity for States to explore the most effective methods of managing this complex transnational phenomenon f the benefit of all, including the optimum infrastructures for inter-state and inter-agency coordination and cooperati on migration issues.

56. In coordination with IOM's administration, IOM's member States are actively exercising their responsibility review and reflect upon on the role and future of the Organization. The member States are undertaking this exerci in light of the changes in the nature of and increased international attention to migration and the Organization, a the challenges that these changes present, as well as factors such as the recommendations contained in the Report the GCIM, the discussions which will take place at the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration a Development in the United Nations General Assembly in September 2006, and ongoing efforts to reform the Unit Nations.

57. The IOM Council looks forward to the success and concrete conclusions of the UN High-Level Dialogue. Membe in their future sessions would discuss their content and policy directions to evolve a strategy to reinforce t correlation between migration and development and strengthen cooperation between IOM, the United Nations, a all other relevant organisations.